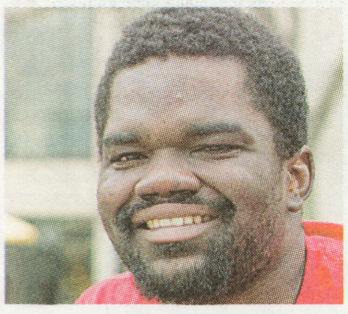
Ironworkers back to train at WCC, boost local economy

An on-campus training program is expected to draw close to 800 participants and bring a substantial economic impact to Washtenaw County. PAGE 6

Meet the Dean

WCC's new Dean of Student Support Services, Liz Orbits (above), has spent a lifetime serving the underserved. Learn what her goals are for the college on PAGE 3



A very long way from home

Paul Katokwe (above) traveled from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Washtenaw Community College to fulfill his dream of studying in the United States. Find out how he hopes to help his homeland on PAGE 3

Another WCC student, Davon Shackleford, traveled *away* from Washtenaw County. Read about his experiences on an International Scholar Laureate Program-sponsored trip to China on PAGE 4

Keeping Up THE GOOD WORK

University of Michigan President Mark S. Schlissel congratulates WCC on its 50th anniversary. PAGE 4

Vote

Tuesday, Aug. 2 is primary election day in Washtenaw County. Voters will be asked to approve a renewal and restoration of a millage, originally passed by voters in 2004, that helps support Washtenaw Community College. For answers to some frequently asked questions about the WCC ballot proposal, see PAGE 5

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Washtenaw Community College
ON THE RECORD
ontherecord.wccnet.edu / WashtenawCC @WashtenawCC July 2016

PHOTO BY JESSICA BIBBEE

Casey Fox, 20, says he cried when he was accepted into the 22-week YouthBuild construction skills program at WCC.

'It's a whole new me:' WCC student credits YouthBuild program with changing his life

By PRINCESS GABBARA
Writer, Public Relations

For the past five months, Casey Fox has been repainting community parks and completing various community service projects around Ypsilanti, while working to put the pieces of his life back together.

Fox, 20, owes his newfound success to YouthBuild, a nationwide program aimed at teaching building construction skills to disadvantaged youth between ages 16-24, while they work toward earning a GED. WCC was the only college in Michigan to receive the $899,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor last fall.

"This program gave me a second chance. It feels great to succeed," Fox said. "They're there to help you and they never judge you."

WCC welcomed its first round of participants–21 to be exact–to campus in February.

To be accepted into the 22-week program, Fox had to successfully complete a six-day mental toughness challenge, which consisted of reading, writing and math tests, team-building exercises and the task of building a bird house.

"When I found out I got into the program, I started crying," Fox said. "Since then, my attitude has changed, my grades have improved and my strong mindset is back. It's a whole new me."

After completing the program, Fox plans to further his education by returning to WCC, where he

— continued on page 8

Toyota endows automotive scholarship

$25K gift will fund a permanent WCC scholarship beginning in 2017

By JESSICA BIBBEE
Intern, Public Relations

The Toyota Technical Center (TTC), located in Ann Arbor, is responsible for the Research and Development in North America for Toyota Motor Corporation and has long supported Washtenaw Community College's mission to make a positive difference in people's lives through accessible and excellent educational programs and services.

One of the ways TTC shows its support is through a recent endowment in the amount of $25,000, awarded to the WCC Foundation.

As WCC celebrates its 50th anniversary and the WCC Foundation celebrates its 30th anniversary, Toyota created the endowment to show its support for the college's commitment to students.

The Toyota Technical Center scholarship is what is called a Gold Endowment (minimum $20,000) that will create a permanent scholarship to support one student per academic year, beginning in the fall semester of 2017.

The endowment will serve students pursuing an associate degree in one of three automotive programs: Automotive Service Technology, Automotive Test Technician, or Powertrain Development Technical.

"Toyota is committed to uplifting aspiring engineers and automakers in our surrounding communities," said Scott Miller, executive engineer of Safety

— continued on page 8

Reflecting on the events that shaped WCC over the last 50 years:

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY
In 2010, WCC installed 140 geothermal wells 400 feet into the ground to help reduce its reliance on fossil fuels. Classrooms and offices in the Larry L. Whitworth Occupational Education building and the WCC Campus Safety and Security Center do not require energy from outside sources.

SCHOOL COLORS
The official school colors of green, gold, and white were selected by the Board of Trustees on January 24, 1967 to represent the three transfer institutions (Eastern Michigan University, University of Michigan and Michigan State University) that WCC students were most likely to attend.

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WCC women help 'move the needle'

By SUSAN FERRARO, APR
Director of Media Relations

Washtenaw Community College President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca and several other women from WCC attended the Michigan ACE Women's Network annual conference held in early June in Lansing.

The Michigan ACE Women's Network provides professional development, networking, mentoring, advocacy and support for women in Michigan's higher education system.

The theme of this year's conference was "Move The Needle in Michigan," a theme which parallels a national initiative which seeks to increase the number of women in senior leadership positions in higher education through programs, research and resources.

COURTESY PHOTO

Shana Barker (left) and Andrea Hemphill at the Michigan ACE Women's Network conference.

Dr. Bellanca participated in a leadership panel discussion which focused on women's battle for gender parity in the workplace.

Dr. Kimberly Hurns, WCC dean of business and computer technologies, is an executive board member and chair of the organization's Women of Color Collaborative committee.

Other WCC representation at the conference came from Madelyne Bernhard-Diab, employment services manager at the college's Harriet Street Center. She gave a presentation on career trajectories and professional development opportunities.

Shana Barker, WCC scholarship and alumni coordinator, and Andrea Hemphill, operations coordinator in the WCC Human Resources Department, led a session which focused on the "Women Of Washtenaw" program – a multi-disciplinary support group of women who hold a variety of roles at the college. Women Of Washtenaw has hosted a variety of events on campus to support women and build a professional network.

COURTESY PHOTO

The title slide from the Ace Women's Network conference presentation.

On the Record is published monthly by Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron River Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-4800

Comments and suggestions are welcomed. email editor Susan Ferraro, APR, at snferraro@wccnet.edu.

For more information about WCC, call 734-973-3300 or visit wccnet.edu.

Washtenaw Community College is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500, Chicago, Illinois 60604-1411; 800-621-7440; ncahlc.org. Contact 734-973-3300 for information about Washtenaw Community College.

ADA/EEO/Title IX/Section 504 Compliance Statements

Washtenaw Community College does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, marital status, disability, veteran status, or any other protected status as provided for and to the extent required by federal and state statutes, nor does the college discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. WCC is committed to compliance in all of its activities and services with the requirements of the Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Public Act 453, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Public Act 220, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Employment compliance inquiries should be directed to the VP of Human Resources, Room 120 in the Business Education building, 734-973-3497. Facility access inquiries should be directed to the VP for Facilities, Grounds and Campus Safety, Room P0112, Plant Operations Building, 734-677-5322. Title IX or ADA/504 inquiries related to programs and services should be directed to the VP for Student and Academic Services, Room SC 247, Student Center Building, 734-973-3536.

Title II Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act Compliance Statement

The Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 is a federal law that mandates the disclosure by all institutions of higher education of the rates of graduation, the number of incidents of certain criminal offenses, the type of security provided on campus, the pertinent policies regarding security on campus and policies that record and deal with alcohol and drug abuse. WCC is in full compliance and provides information annually through various means, including college publications, wccnet.edu or email. Inquiries concerning the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act should be directed to Washtenaw Community College, Office of the Vice President for Student and Academic Services, Room SC 247, Student Center Building, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-4800; 734-973-3536.

WCC Board of Trustees

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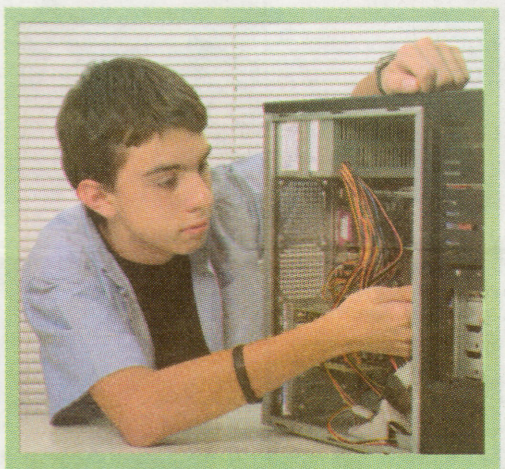
Washtenaw Community College

Campus Calendar

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CLASSES

Check out these and other noncredit classes at *wccnet.edu/economic-development*



SUMMER TECH CAMPS & COLLEGE PREP WORKSHOPS

Get your summer in gear! Registration is open now for tech camps that provide fun, hands-on learning opportunities, and our career and college prep camps that help teens set the foundation for future success. For descriptions of all available camps – open to ages 8-18 – and registration information, visit *wccnet.edu/camps*.

HOME & LIFE
The Soap-Making Workshop

7/6 Learn how to make your own soap in this fun, hands-on class.

Wednesday, July 6
6-9 p.m.
Dixboro United Methodist Church
Cost: $59 plus $30 mandatory fee

CAREER DEVELOPMENT
Strategic Prep for PMP Certification

If you are an experienced project manager looking to solidify your skills, stand out to employers and maximize your earning potential, the PMP® credential may be the right choice for you. Receive guidance on preparing and studying for the PMP Certification exam and submitting your application.

7/9

Saturdays, July 9 to Aug. 6
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Main Campus
Cost: $850 plus $100 mandatory fee

DIGITAL MARKETING
Twitter Tactics for Your Business

7/11 Learn to build brand awareness, drive sales and promote your company by harnessing the power of Twitter.

Monday, July 11 6-9 p.m.
Main Campus Cost: $45

twitter

DIGITAL MARKETING
Basic Video Production

Learn to make compelling, effective videos in this hands-on class. Go from start to a polished finish, working with basic lighting, sound and editing techniques as well as marketing and SEO.

7/12

Tuesday and Thursday, July 12 and 14
6-9 p.m.
Main Campus
Cost: $99

FOOD & DRINK
Rustic Italian Cooking: Grilling Meat and Vegetables

7/13 Assist in preparing a variety of grilled specialties to add to your home repertoire.

Wednesday July 13
6-9 p.m.
Dixboro United Methodist Church
Cost: $39 plus $30 mandatory fee

DIGITAL MARKETING
Social Media Community Management and Moderating

Discover effective techniques for controlling the conversation on social media while allowing people to give you meaningful feedback.

7/18

Monday, July 18
6-9 p.m.
Main Campus
Cost: $45

DIGITAL MARKETING
Video Editing Basics

7/19 Get hands-on experience using video editing software that will give your videos a more polished look.

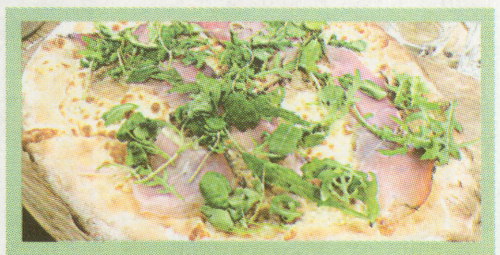
Tuesdays and Thursdays, July 19-28
6-9 p.m.
Main Campus
Cost: $169

HISTORY & CULTURE
Islands of the Great Lakes

Learn about the many islands located in the Great Lakes, about their unique characteristics and how to help conserve island biodiversity.

7/20

Wednesdays and Thursdays, July 20-28
6:30-8:30 p.m.
Main Campus
Cost: $95



FOOD & DRINK
Rustic Italian Cooking: Pizza

7/20 Learn to make your own authentic Italian pizza from scratch.

Wednesday July 20
6-9 p.m.
Dixboro United Methodist Church
Cost: $39 plus $30 mandatory fee

CREATIVE ARTS
Glass Beads Jewelry Design: Necklace Workshop

7/21 Learn the basics for making necklaces using beautiful glass and metal beads.

Thursday July 21
6-8:45 p.m.
Main Campus
Cost: $39 plus $30 mandatory fee

DIGITAL MARKETING
Google Analytics

7/25 Take an in-depth look at Google Analytics. Learn what is measured and what it means.

Monday, July 25
6-9 p.m.
Main Campus
Cost: $45

CREATIVE ARTS
Glass Beads Jewelry Design: Bracelet Workshop

7/26 Make your own bracelet using wire and stringing techniques for glass and other beads.

Tuesday July 26
6-8:45 p.m.
Main Campus
Cost: $39 plus $25 mandatory fee

7/27 FOOD & DRINK
Rustic Italian Cooking: Summer Antipasti

7/27 Learn how to make three traditional Italian appetizers to please your family and friends.

Wednesday July 27
6-9 p.m.
Dixboro United Methodist Church
Cost: $39 plus $30 mandatory fee

CAMPUS REMINDER

FALL REGISTRATION

Registration is now open for the Fall 2016 semester at Washtenaw Community College. Visit wccnet.edu/apply to get started.

STUDENT PROFILE: PAUL KATOKWE

Distant tragedy and a dream bring student to WCC campus

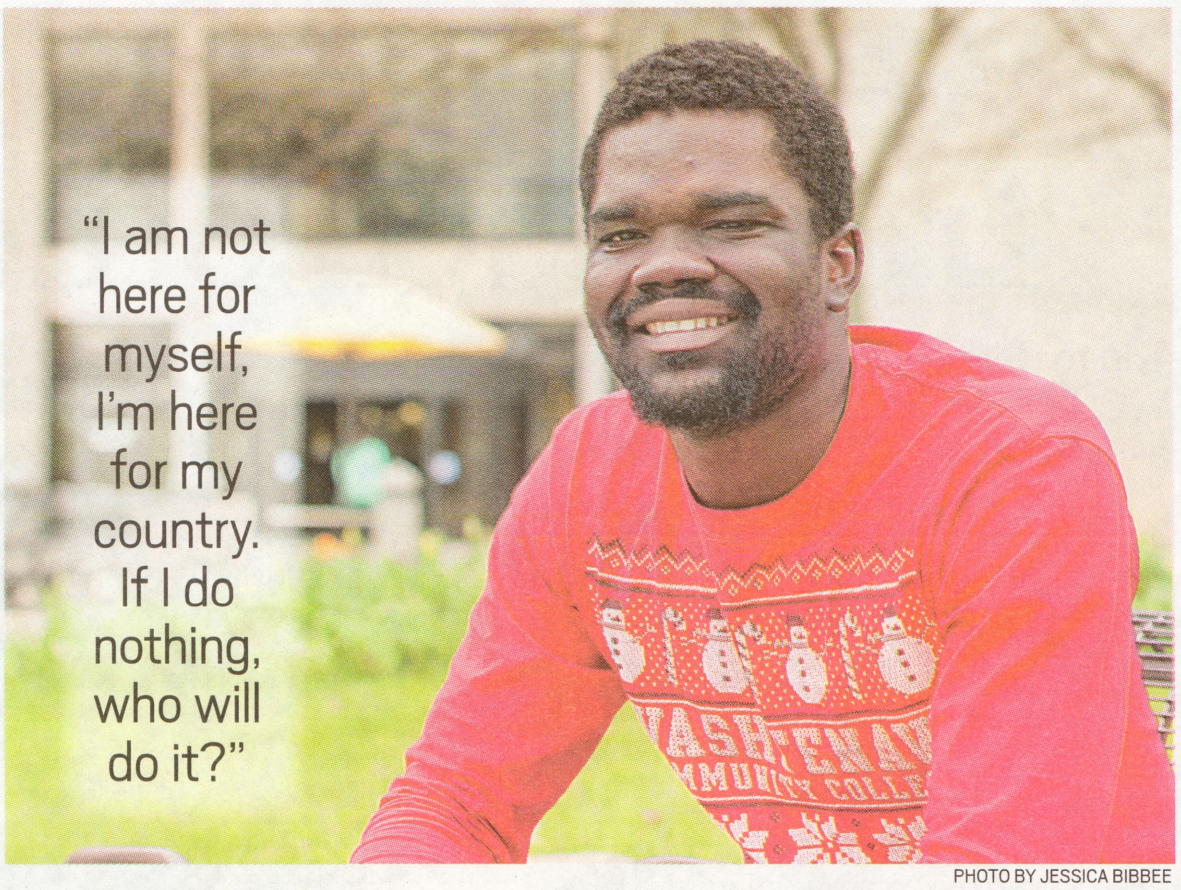


PHOTO BY JESSICA BIBBEE

Paul Katokwe traveled from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Washtenaw Community College in order to fulfill his dream of studying in the United States.

By JESSICA BIBBEE
Intern, Public Relations

For one student in Kinshasa, capitol city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, watching a tragedy on the news led to a search on Facebook. And that search brought Paul Arsene Katokwe one step closer to Washtenaw Community College and realizing his childhood dreams.

In October 2015, Umpqua Community College was the scene of one of the deadliest mass shootings in Oregon's history. As Katokwe followed the news that unfolded in its aftermath, he came across a Facebook post by Rachel Barsch, Coordinator of Student Activities at WCC, who sent a tribute to the Umpqua community on behalf of the college.

He then searched the internet for WCC. "I didn't choose Michigan, I chose Washtenaw Community College," said Katokwe.

From a young age, Katokwe told his mother that he would study in the United States, even though they both knew that financial realities could quash that dream. With six siblings, money was always tight for his family and America was a dream away. "My father has a lot of problems, and I am just one of them," he says with a laugh.

Katokwe was already enrolled at the Catholic University of Congo, but he knew that he would need to put his core studies on hold and focus on his English studies. His hard work paid off, and after just one year with the Education USA program through the US Embassy in Kinshasa, he passed the Test of English as a Foreign Language.

After searching for many colleges in the U.S., he finally applied to three–and when Washtenaw Community College opened its doors to him, he booked a flight immediately.

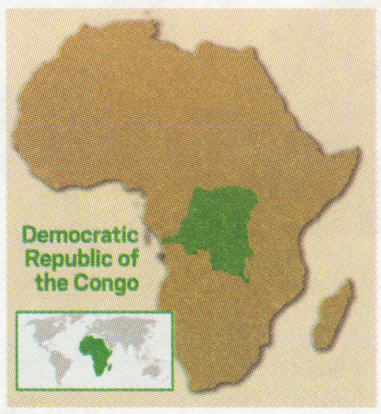
Coming to America

He had already cleared major hurdles just to get to America when he found a whole new set of challenges – losing his luggage at the airport, braving his first-ever winter temperatures without a hat or gloves, and finding his way from Detroit Metro Airport into downtown Ann Arbor. While asking for directions there, he was mistaken for a homeless person.

But now that he was finally in America, he knew that he would not give up. With the same determination that brought him here from so far away, he knew that with one step at a time, he would find his way again.

One of the first people he met at WCC orientation was Terri Jennings, International Student Admissions Technician at WCC. Jennings said she was surprised to see him just four days after he'd received his travel visa. "It is thrilling to see students like Paul overcome so many obstacles and actually be able to achieve their dream of an education in the U.S., which will open up huge opportunities for their futures," Jennings said.

But Katokwe has an even bigger dream–using his education to make a difference back in his home country.



"I am not here for myself, I'm here for my country," he said. "If I do nothing, who will do it?"

For now, he will focus on his business studies, so he will be better equipped to address the economic issues facing his country, including rampant corruption.

"There are many ways of getting money. Corruption, unfortunately, is one of them," he said.

In his home country, educators are not well paid, and a bribe for inflated grades can appeal to those teachers needing to feed their families. While Katokwe doesn't condone this, he is able to provide the perspective of some educators there.

"When you are poor, you have a lot of problems to solve, you have your mind on a lot of different things, and you can't just focus on your students," he said.

Becoming a Leader

Since attending classes at WCC, Katokwe has had the opportunity to experience a whole new education system in America. In his first semester, he received high honors for his achievements in the classroom.

"WCC instructors are really committed to students succeeding," he said. "For them it's more than giving grades. It's about helping students to reach their academic goals. It's not always this way in my country."

Katokwe had the opportunity to be a leader and mentor to his fellow students at the Congo American Language Institute in the DRC. When asked if he sees himself being an educator one day, he says "Of course. Already, I have helped a lot of people with my stories of determination and courage. Failing is not a problem, but not trying is a problem."

Katokwe's first application to be a student ambassador on campus did not result in a job, but he was encouraged to reapply after he'd had time to settle in to the WCC community.

Barbara Hauswirth, Experiential Learning Coordinator at WCC, recalls meeting with Katokwe and how she was impressed with his fortitude to push through any of the barriers that stood in the way of him coming to WCC.

"He told me that he wanted to let other students know that 'Everyone has obstacles to overcome. I had many. If you want something badly enough, you will find a way to pursue your dreams. If I can come here, despite the obstacles, so can you.' Paul is hoping to become a student ambassador so he could encourage other WCC students with his story of perseverance," Hauswirth said.

If his past determination is an indication of anything, Katokwe will have even more reasons to share his story on campus this fall. ●

WCC online programs earn national ranking

When it comes to online or distance-learning classes, Washtenaw Community College is counted among the best in the nation.

WCC recently was ranked among the top 50 "Best Value" online community colleges in the nation by Value Colleges, an organization that rates programs at colleges and universities across the nation.

Value Colleges narrowed the field of 1,700 community colleges to include institutions with more than 10 online programs, more than 2,000 students and under $10,000 in annual tuition costs. Evaluation criteria were based on a formula that included tuition costs, graduation rates and the number of online programs offered.

Online classes are among the fastest growing offerings at colleges across the country, including WCC, because of the convenience and flexibility they provide to working adults.

"We in the Center for Interactive Teaching & Learning at WCC were honored to receive this acknowledgment," said Peter Baccile, WCC's Senior Director of E-Learning, Distance Learning. "This is a testament to our development team working in collaboration with faculty developers. We have a simple focus of 'Rigor, Engagement and the WCC Experience' incorporated into each course design."

Baccile noted that the college only a year and a half ago launched a plan to grow online programs. Today there are 213 classes offered with more than 5,200 students enrolled in the 2016 Winter term alone.

He stressed the teamwork that cut across many departments and disciplines made the online program succeed. Academic deans and faculty, Students Services, Finance, IT and Marketing pulled together in an effort to provide first-rate programs, he said. ●

New WCC dean: 'It's an honor to be a part of someone's success story'

By PRINCESS GABBARA
Writer, Public Relations

Liz Orbits has spent a lifetime serving the underserved. So, when the opportunity to help students and the community on a broader level presented itself, she was all in.

After serving on an interim basis for several months, Orbits was recently appointed to Dean of Student Support Services at Washtenaw Community College.

Previously, Orbits was manager of the Student Resource Center (SRC) at WCC, where she worked with a caseload of students and community groups to solicit funding, developed workshops to support at-risk populations and oversaw the college's food pantry.

Orbits holds a bachelor's degree in humanities from the University of Michigan and two master's degrees from Eastern Michigan University – one in educational psychology and the other in counseling. She is a licensed professional counselor and will soon receive her Ed.D. in community college leadership from Ferris State University.

"Community colleges are a big part of my value system," Orbits said. "They provide second chances for individuals who might not have had an initial opportunity to attend college. It's rewarding to work with diverse populations of students, especially the underserved and seeing students overcome challenges and reach their academic goals."

Orbits brings 10 years of knowledge and experience in academic advising, career counseling, case management and mental health services in university and community college settings.

In her new role, Orbits will oversee academic advising, personal counseling services, the SRC, the International Student Center, Learning Support Services, and the Adult Transition (GED preparation) program.

As SRC manager, Orbits worked to bring on a group of "dedicated and ethical" professionals who made the the center what it is today.

"The case managers have been instrumental in showcasing the SRC's services by partnering with other departments on campus to provide events and workshops, as well as building community networks the college can be proud of," Orbits said. "Most importantly, they have and continue to serve our students well."

Moving forward, there are a multitude of goals Orbits wants to accomplish as dean, including showcasing

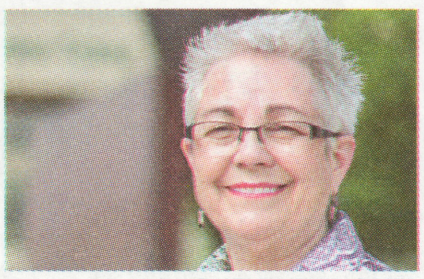


PHOTO BY JESSICA BIBBEE

Liz Orbits, WCC's new Dean of Student Support Services.

Student Support Services (Advising and Counseling, Career Services, Transfer Resources, etc.) to ensure that WCC students are connected to these services seamlessly.

She also hopes to work directly with faculty to help them understand the significance of Student Support Services as it relates to student success, retention and completion. But, her main mission is to remain student-centered.

"Our students come first. Every decision we make impacts them," Orbits said. "Because of WCC's open-door policy, a lot of students find their self-esteem and family here and they find a new meaning in their lives. It's an honor to be a part of someone's success story." ●

'We can learn a lot from each other'

Trip to China inspires WCC student pursuing a career in medicine

By PRINCESS GABBARA
Writer, Public Relations

"It was nice being the foreigner for once," said Washtenaw Community College student Davon Shackleford about his recent, 12-day trip to China.

Last month, Shackleford traveled to Xi'an, Shanghai and Beijing, where he climbed the Great Wall of China, making it all the way to the top.

Shackleford's recent adventure may sound like a classic "no work, all play" trip. But it was much more. He was among a select number of students who were part of the International Scholar Laureate Program (ISLP). According to ISLP's website, the program gives college students the opportunity to gain international perspectives on their future careers.

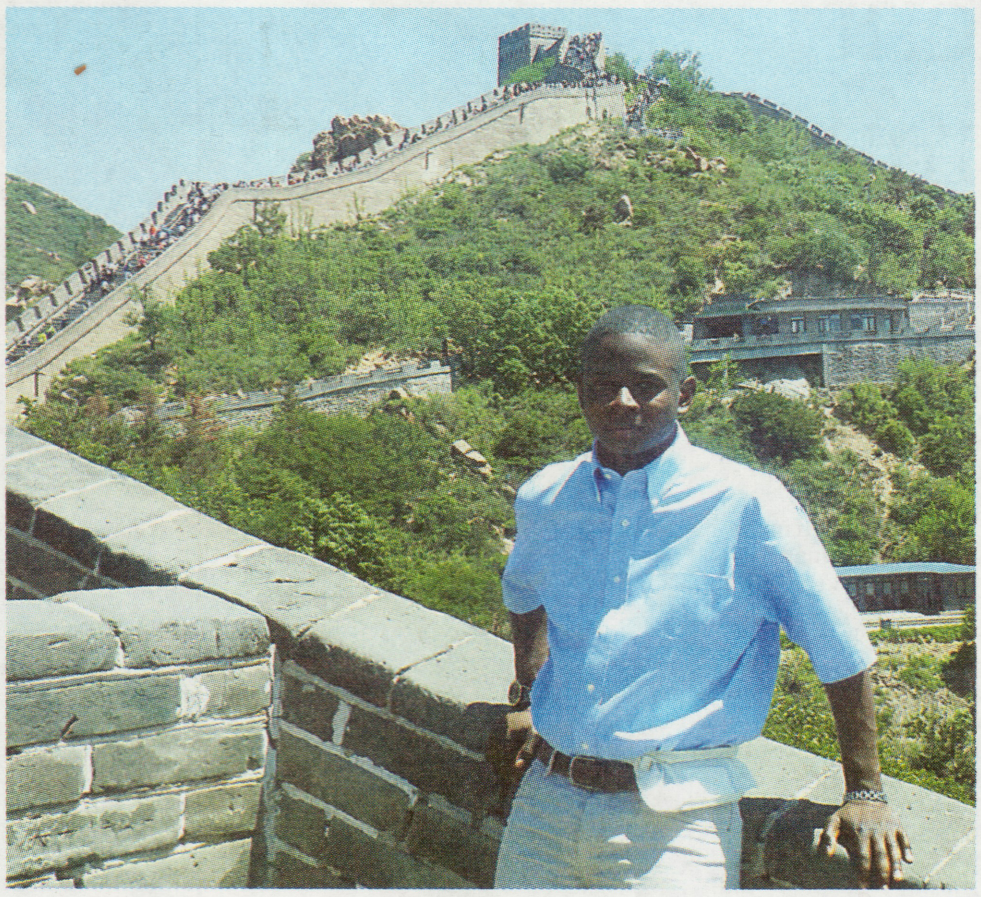
The students were separated by career fields. Because Shackleford aspires to become a physician, his specific focus was on the Medicine & Science Delegation. He learned about China's health care system by visiting hospitals, clinics and universities and meeting and working with Chinese doctors, practitioners and administrators.

"The world is becoming increasingly globalized and we can learn a lot from each other," Shackleford said. "Having cultural competency in the health care field is very important."

Shackleford was nominated for the program by WCC's chapter of Phi Kappa Theta – an honor society for community college students who have achieved academic success – where he also serves as president. Not one to pass up once-in-a-lifetime opportunities such as this one, Shackleford immediately accepted, but there was one problem: choosing between China and Australia.

Ultimately, Shackleford decided on China because "it was an ancient civilization and we hear about China in the news often, but I wanted go there myself and see it with my own eyes."

By doing so, he forged connections and friendships with students from other parts of the country and world, including California and Washington, D.C. and was wowed when a student from South Africa showed him the selfie she had taken with a cheetah.



COURTESY PHOTO

WCC student Davon Shackleford climbs the Great Wall of China during an International Scholar Laureate Program visit to the country.

"I was surrounded by top students and that was a unique experience within itself," Shackleford said. "To be surrounded by so much talent was inspiring."

But he also made time to socialize with the locals and since one of the best ways to experience a city is through its food, that meant eating fried snake.

"It wasn't that bad," Shackleford said.

While he understands that not everyone is adventurous enough to eat fried snake, he recommends that other students seek out opportunities to travel abroad. Shackleford's trip to China marks his first international experience.

"Don't think you're limited just because you're at a community college," he said.

The summer marks Shackleford's final semester at the college. This fall, he transfers to the University of Michigan, but in typical Davon Shackleford fashion, he will first complete a research co-op at U-M this summer. Being from a small town in South Carolina, Shackleford never thought he would see Washington, D.C., let alone China, but says he's grateful for all the wonderful opportunities the college affords its students.

> "WCC opened doors for me that would not have been possible otherwise."
>
> **– Davon Shackleford**

Last summer, as a member of the WCC Political Science Club, Shackleford traveled to D.C., where he met Congresswoman Debbie Dingell and visited the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial and Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial.

"WCC opened doors for me that would not have been possible otherwise," he said. "Finding WCC is the best thing that could have happened to me." ●

For more information about the International Scholar Laureate Program, visit www.scholarlaureate.org.

Keeping Up THE GOOD WORK

A message from ...

MARK S. SCHLISSEL
President, University of Michigan

The following letter was sent to Washtenaw Community College President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca in recognition of WCC's 50th anniversary. It was read aloud by WCC Board Chair Richard Landau, Ph.D., J.D., at the inaugural President's Leadership Luncheon this spring. More than 150 community, political and business leaders were in attendance.

"On behalf of the University of Michigan, I am pleased to extend my greetings to everyone attending the President's Leadership Luncheon. I wish I could be there with you to celebrate Washtenaw Community College's 50th Anniversary. What a wonderful milestone!

"You have my deepest admiration for the work you do to enhance the community we share. One of the great strengths of Washtenaw County is that it is home to many distinguished public institutions of higher education. Your inspiring leadership is helping thousands of students achieve their educational dreams. For students who attend WCC, and then come to the University of Michigan, we know they contribute so positively to our intellectual environment.

"U-M is proud to count President Rose Bellanca and the entire WCC team as tremendous partners in education. I value what we can achieve together, and look forward to many more years of successful collaboration on behalf of students and our community.

"Once again, you have my best wishes and hearty congratulations on this momentous occasion."

Sincerely,
Mark S. Schlissel

Washtenaw Community College 50 YEARS
OPENING DOORS

FACULTY PROFILE: JAS OBRECHT

Writing instructor in tune with his calling

By JESSICA BIBBEE
Intern, Public Relations

It's not every day that one has the opportunity to study under a nationally recognized and published author, but at Washtenaw Community College, it's just another day for students enrolled in Jas Obrecht's creative writing course.

For every student that walks into his classroom, Obrecht sees an opportunity, "How can I transform your writing into something that can get published, that can open the door for your career?"

Most students realize the power of writing every time they submit an essay in an application to college or for a scholarship. When students share their story, it can have a profound effect on their future path.

"One of the things I love about teaching is that I can take all of the lessons I've learned throughout my life and impart them to a group of people to go farther, to better their lives," said Obrecht.

One of those life lessons is how he helped launch the career of rock guitarist Eddie Van Halen. Van Halen has credited Obrecht's 1978 *Guitar Player* magazine interview, his first, with helping to kickstart his musical career.

Obrecht is proud of being a part of that pivotal moment for Van Halen. As a result, other musicians sought him out, knowing that he had the ability to unleash their career potential.

Having written for most national music publications, Obrecht offers a wealth of knowledge about the writing process.

This has proved to be a goldmine for his students. In more than 15 years of teaching at WCC, Obrecht can count on his fingers the number of students who didn't complete his course.

"There's a human drive to have us make our lives matter. I think that's why people go to school. I think that's why people go to WCC," says Obrecht. "One of the ways we can make our lives matter is by writing."

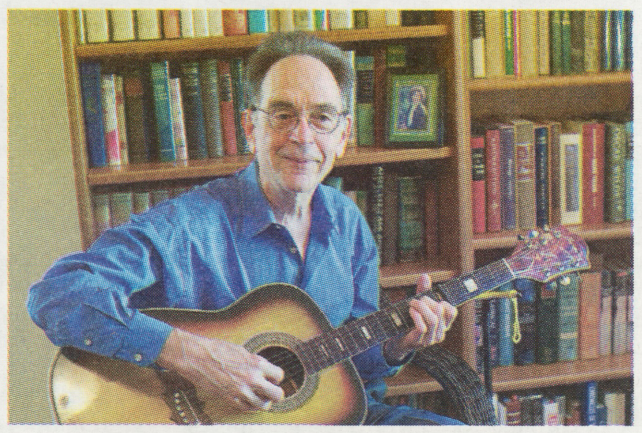
Obrecht encourages students to dig deep and tap the inspiration that lives within each of them. While music was his guiding influence, he encourages students to write about their own topics, ranging from personal tragedy to heartbreak to joy.

The responsibility that he feels in sharing his knowledge and experience is evident in his writing and in his teaching. His years of experience are passed on to his students, helping them to build their own futures.

It is said that those who write control history, and Obrecht believes that the written word is transcendent, that writing is a tool that empowers us to shape our own futures.

"If you have a passion for something and can combine that with the skill of writing, you can create a career for yourself and open the door to a lifetime of opportunities."

When he is not sharing his love of writing with students at WCC, Obrecht can be found authoring books and articles. In addition to having written hundreds of magazine cover stories, he has six books that are currently in print and essays featured on the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry. Obrecht co-wrote a book with James "Al" Hendrix, father of the late musician Jimi Hendrix.



WCC creative writing instructor Jas Obrecht.

PHOTO BY DAVID AMMER

Most recently, Obrecht published *Early Blues: The First Stars of Blues Guitar* (University of Minnesota Press, November 2015) and his next book, a collection of interviews entitled *Talking Guitar: Conversations with Musicians Who Shaped 20th Century American Music*, will be published by the University of North Carolina Press in April 2017.

Obrecht says he plans to teach at WCC for as many years as is possible. You can find more of Obrecht's writing at www.jasobrecht.com. ●

Answering FAQs about WCC's ballot proposal

In February of this year, the Washtenaw Community College Board of Trustees unanimously approved placing a millage renewal and restoration on the August 2 primary election ballot.

Below are some answers to frequently asked questions about the millage:

When is the election?

Tuesday, August 2, 2016. The polls will be open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.

What is on the ballot?

Voters residing within the boundaries of Washtenaw County will vote on a 0.85 operating millage proposal.

Why is this election necessary?

The primary purpose of the election is to seek voter approval of a 0.85 operating millage originally approved by voters in 2004. Revenue from this millage provides essential financial support to WCC's programs and services.

How will the ballot proposal benefit students and the Washtenaw community?

A recent survey revealed that Washtenaw residents are very pleased with the programs and services provided by WCC. Survey respondents gave high marks to the quality of instruction, the variety of programs and services, and how well WCC prepares students for jobs and careers. In summary, the survey respondents asked WCC to "keep up the good work."

In short, the ballot proposal will help support the good work WCC has been doing for 50 years while helping the college position itself for the challenges and changes students and community members will face in the immediate future. It is designed to continue supporting "good work," such as...

- Providing a comprehensive curriculum that prepares students for jobs, careers, and continuing education.
- Offering over 200 continuing education courses each semester.
- Sponsoring community events that attracted over 80,000 Washtenaw County participants last year.
- Attaining a top-ten ranking for Washtenaw Technical Middle College in Newsweek Magazine's "America's Top High Schools."
- Generating a $373 million economic impact on Washtenaw County.

Why does the ballot say that this is a millage 'renewal and restoration'?

Washtenaw voters approved a 0.85 operating millage proposal in 2004. In general terms, this is a request to renew that millage for another 10 years. However, the 2004 operating millage approved by voters was reduced by the 1978 Headlee Amendment to the Michigan Constitution. As a result, the WCC millage was "rolled back" 0.0116 mills, from 0.85 mills to 0.8384 mills. As a result, on August 2, Washtenaw voters will vote on a 0.85 ballot proposal composed of a renewal of 0.8332 mills and a restoration of 0.0168 mills.

What is the Headlee Amendment?

In a nutshell, the Headlee Amendment requires a local unit of government (like Washtenaw Community College) to reduce its millage when annual growth on existing property is greater than the rate of inflation.

The local unit's millage rate is "rolled back" so that the resulting growth in property tax revenue, county-wide, is no more than the rate of inflation. A "Headlee override" is a vote by the electors to return the millage to the amount originally authorized by a vote of the people, and is necessary to counteract the effects of the "Headlee rollback."

What will the ballot proposal cost?

If voters approve the 0.85 ballot proposal, the WCC tax rate will be the same as it was in 2004. Returning to this tax rate will require a renewal of 0.8332 mills and a restoration of 0.0168 mills. The restoration is technically a tax increase and will cost a person living in a $200,000 house about 2¢ per week.

If the ballot proposal is approved by voters, will property values be affected?

Real estate values tend to be higher in communities with school districts and community colleges that offer quality educational programs and services, and have up-to-date facilities. Property values tend to be lower in communities that do not offer a comprehensive curriculum or that have educational facilities that are out of date and poorly maintained.

Who can vote on this ballot proposal?

Anyone can vote who resides in Washtenaw County, will be 18 years of age or older on Election Day, and is registered to vote by July 5.

Where can I register to vote?

You can register to vote at any Secretary of State office or at the clerk's office where you reside.

Do I need to update my voter registration?

You need to update your voter registration if you have changed your name or address since the last time you voted. You can do this at any Secretary of State office or at the Clerk's office where you reside.

Where do I vote?

You will vote at your regular precinct in the community where you reside. If you are unsure of your precinct, visit www.michigan.gov/vote.

Can I vote by absentee ballot?

If you expect to be out of town on Election Day; or, if you are 60 years of age or older; or, if you are unable to vote without assistance at the polls; or, if you cannot attend the polls due to religious reasons, you can vote by absentee ballot. For details, go to www.michigan.gov/vote and click on the "Absentee Voting" button.

You can obtain an application from the Clerk's office where you reside, complete your application and vote–all in one stop. The whole process takes less than five minutes.

Where can I get more information about the election?

Contact Community and Government Relations 734-477-8933 or millageinfo@wccnet.edu.

PHOTOS BY CJ SOUTH

The on-campus Hoop House CORE Garden produces crops that are distributed on campus and in the community. Plans call for traveling food carts to be placed in key low-income neighborhoods near the college.

Feeding hearts, nourishing souls

WCC's 'Hoop House CORE Garden' grows healthy food for campus and community

By SUSAN FERRARO, APR
Director of Media Relations

If there is a program out there that truly serves not just the college community but the community at large – it is producing good, healthy food.

Yes, food production, but production in the most holistic of ways. In 2014, WCC's "Hoop House CORE Garden" (a greenhouse garden) was built and produced a bumper crop of seven varieties of tomatoes, collards, kale, green beans, squash, chard, beets, sweet peas, lettuce, arugula and a variety of herbs. Not bad for the inaugural planting. More than 400 pounds of produce was distributed during the 2014-15 academic year.

Come harvest time, these tasty and healthy vegetables and herbs made their way to students in the college's Culinary Arts department for their student-run Garrett's restaurant. But there was more than enough to also provide these healthy foods for the clients of the WCC Harriet Street Extension Center in Ypsilanti.

"The Hoop House CORE Garden's produce contribution makes a significant difference in the lives of our customers who don't have access to fresh herbs and vegetables," said Madelyne Bernard-Diab, employment services manager at the Harriet Street Center.

The Center offers credit and non-credit classes in areas such as basic skills building, GED prep and basic computer classes.

WCC's "Hoop House CORE Garden" found its origins with Kimberly Groce, a WCC Division counselor, who, in an earlier interview with *On The Record*, said she looked around campus and noticed an unsettling sight. Most students were sitting alone connecting with the outside world via their smart phones, tablets or laptops. She observed very little interaction among the students.

It struck Groce that perhaps all the new technology, despite its wondrous advantages, might have as an unintentional negative effect - and that is, isolating students. She began to think about a type of activity that would bring students together and create an environment where they would put their technology down and do something physical that would get their bodies moving and minds and souls nourished - while fueling her passion for gardening.

This is how the WCC "Hoop House CORE Garden" was born. Groce serves as the Core Garden Farmer, purchases all seeds and plants, designs the yearly plan and is responsible for all operational aspects.

It took a village before it became real: community residents who volunteer on a regular basis, support from WCC's President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca, and contributions from WCC faculty and members of its Sustainability Council.

Most importantly, WCC students are involved year-round with the garden. Many are enrolled in a class called Farm Harvest and Management which is taught by Groce. The class instructs students on how to grow food properly, using organic practices from seed to harvest. At times, students from the Washtenaw Technical Middle College (located on the WCC campus) visit the garden and do short term projects under Groce's guidance. Many students use their experience to further their educational studies – specifically those who are interested in horticulture or careers in environmental science.

The underlying purpose of the garden remains unchanged: to use the produce to help those in need of healthy food. WCC's Student Resource Center has, in the past, been able to provide non-perishable food to students in need, but not fresh vegetables. Students are encouraged and welcome to go to the garden and pick their own.

Over the past year, the garden has grown to produce more than 57 different varieties of vegetables, herbs and now, edible flowers. The garden volunteers and students have added unique varieties of vegetables, such as black cherry and pear cherry tomatoes and purple and Italian basil herbs.

Seeds from this year's harvest will be shared with the WCC seed library – one of just five in the state of Michigan. Students, staff and the public are welcome to browse the library of seeds for planting at home.

The WCC "Hoop House CORE Garden" has big plans to expand this summer and into the 2016 Fall semester – with the desire to reach out to those in need, both on campus and off.

Once again, under the direction of Groce, plans call for the addition of traveling food carts to be placed in key low-income neighborhoods near the college.

"Introducing healthy produce to people who ordinarily would not have this option reminds me of why we started the garden in the first place. It brings people together – in person, in ways that connect them physically, emotionally, spiritually – and with compassion for others," said Groce. "It has surpassed every expectation that I had when I conceived the garden. It truly is a work of art and a haven of peace."

Washtenaw Community College

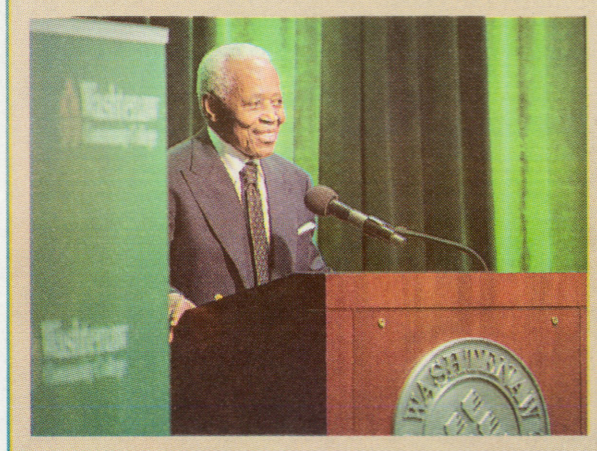
FAST FACTS

'OPENING DOORS' TO THE COMMUNITY

Washtenaw Community College's 50th anniversary theme is "Opening Doors." And that's just what the college continues to do. Not just for students but for the community at large.

Here are just a few of the more than 3,000 events held on campus during the last school year:

- Washtenaw Economic Club fall and spring luncheons featuring local economists and business leaders as guest presenters.



Ann Arbor businessman John W. Barfield presents at a Washtenaw Economic Club luncheon.

PHOTO BY STEVE KUZMA

- A visit from a delegation of human resources officials from Rizhao, China, who toured WCC's campus to learn more about human resource management and the community college model in the United States.

President Dr. Rose B Bellanca receives a gift from the Rizhao delegation on behalf of WCC—a colorful, silken scarf.

PHOTO BY JESSICA BIBBEE

- The 58th annual Southeast Michigan Science Fair with more than 260 students exhibiting science-related experiments and analyses of scientific methods.

Science teacher and fair official Deano Smith (right) stands with second-place winner Luena Maillard.

PHOTO BY JESSICA BIBBEE

- The 19th annual Women's Council of the Washtenaw Community College Foundation annual luncheon attended by more than 200 guests. The council raises funds for scholarships, grant funding for childcare, books and emergency needs.

- Annual Spring Career Fair. More than 80 companies were on hand in the Morris Lawrence building to talk with students about future job opportunities.

Students and job seekers gathered information at the Ipanema Solutions It Works! table.

PHOTO BY JESSICA BIBBEE

- Fall and spring Free College Day. More than 700 community members attended a variety of classes ranging from bike repair to the history and geography of the Great Lakes, all for free.

PHOTO BY KIMBERLY A. BORECKI-TROIANO

Ambra Melendez of Local 361 in New York, N.Y., goes through a training session during last summer's event at WCC.

Ironworkers back on campus

By PRINCESS GABBARA
Writer, Public Relations

For the seventh consecutive year, the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers Training program will be held at Washtenaw Community College from July 18-22.

Nearly 800 instructors, contractors, business managers, business agents, and owners from the U.S. and Canada attended last year and just as many are expected to attend this summer.

Ironworker attendees receive training in welding, structural steel erection, architectural and ornamental ironwork, concrete reinforcement, rigging and machinery moving and installation, as well as blueprint reading, computer skills and a number of other trade-related subjects.

"Ensuring that we have the most qualified instructors will help us continue to meet the needs of the construction industry and allow us to maintain our reputation as the most skilled and highly trained workforce in the industry," said Ironworkers International General President Eric Dean.

Additionally, several new and upgraded courses will be offered this year, including "Bar Joists, Decking, and Erection Drawings," "Installing Metal Roof Systems," "Contracting Business Fundamentals," and "Construction Profitability."

In March 2015, WCC and the Iron Workers Union signed a five-year contract extension. Besides providing valuable training, the trade union's annual event generates nearly $5 million in economic impact into Washtenaw County.

The Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau provides hospitality services and events for the attendees during their stay.

"The Washtenaw County CVB and Washtenaw Community College are incredibly fortunate to find such amazing partners in the Ironworkers," said Mary Kerr, Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau President and CEO. "They return to our community because they know they are appreciated and that our partnership fosters a climate, which produces broad economic success for our community and ensures that their workforce is well prepared for the future.

"When the Ironworkers recently committed to returning to WCC for years to come, it was a testament of the training opportunities available at WCC and the amazing job done by all."

WCC sponsors A2 Tech Trek

By JESSICA BIBBEE
Intern, Public Relations

On a beautiful Friday afternoon, downtown Ann Arbor was abuzz with curiosity over all-things tech.

Ann Arbor SPARK, Ann Arbor's engine for economic development, hosted the 2nd annual A2 Tech Trek, an open house of tech companies and incubators.

"The goal is to inspire students to become future entrepreneurs, job seekers to find new opportunities and others in the community to support the entrepreneurial community," states the Ann Arbor SPARK event website. "These are the businesses that are driving the economy forward in the Ann Arbor region."

Washtenaw Community College's Computer Information Technology Department co-sponsored the event and was onsite to answer questions and provide program information about its various tech certificates and degrees.

"Participating in Tech Trek is extremely important for WCC," said Dr. Kimberly Hurns, Dean of Business and Computer Technologies at WCC. "As Ann Arbor grows as a tech hub, we are a key part of the local industry as a pipeline for talent and retraining opportunities for IT professionals."

PHOTO BY JESSICA BIBBEE

Victoria Bennett (right), Academic Associate in the Business and Computer Technologies Division at WCC, shares information on the dual-enrollment program with a local high school student.

More than 1,600 people signed up to visit more than 60 tech companies, incubators, and institutions, all within walking-distance in downtown Ann Arbor.

WCC representatives answered questions and provided program information about its various tech certificates and degrees.

Prospective students and those seeking employment at WCC stopped by to learn about their options. Ann Arbor youth were invited to don a graduation cap and gown and "try on being a WCC grad."

With many programs in Information Technology and Digital Arts, WCC offers a broad range of classes from 3D Animation and film-making to Java and web database programming.

For a complete list of the college's programs, visit tech.wccnet.edu.

INNOVATION

SUCCESS IN ACCESS

The WCC Foundation

Celebrating 30 Years!

The power of a mom and wife's resilience

Scholarship helps a family of five in times of severe hardship

Catherine and her family: Penn, Francesca, Tony and Eva.

When brides pronounce the customary words "till death do us part" on their wedding day, death is, in fact, typically not on their mind. But things were different for Catherine Lollio. A year before her wedding, Tony, her future husband, was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a progressive neurodegenerative disease. It is a terminal condition and the couple, parents of three young children, were told that he only had two to five years left to live.

A former U.S. Army veteran, Tony had to quit his job because of his declining health. Catherine continued to work in retail for a year but subsequently had to resign. "Tony became paralyzed and depended on me for all his physical needs. I needed to transition to the role of his primary caregiver," she explained.

Faced with the responsibility of supporting her entire family, she saw salvation in education. "After the first year of initial shock and denial from the diagnosis wore off, I realized that getting an education was key to making sure that, when the time would come, I could re-enter the workforce and support our family on one income," Catherine said.

That's when the WCC Foundation came into the picture. Catherine was awarded a scholarship that allowed her to enroll in Washtenaw Community College's business program. "The Foundation Scholarship has lifted a tremendous financial burden off my shoulders. I no longer have to wonder if paying for books this semester will be more important than my husband's supplements and therapies," she said.

Catherine has been juggling wife, mother and student duties with all her might. "After I put my children to bed every night at 8:30pm, I start my homework and study until my eyelids won't stay open. I wake up at 7:00am and do it all over again." Her hard work is paying off. An honor student, Catherine will graduate in May 2017. She already plans on earning her bachelor's degree thanks to WCC's transfer agreement with Eastern Michigan University. Ultimately, she would like to open her own retail store. Doing so would allow her to support her family while working alongside her husband every day.

Like many other WCC students, Catherine had the grades, the will and the work ethic required to succeed. Now she has access to higher education thanks to the financial support of the WCC Foundation. She highlights the fact that, by helping her and Tony, the donors also make a difference for their three children, Eva, Francesca and Penn: "Because of your generous support, you have made attending college possible for me. You have given our family a step up in this world, and helped us through this difficult season of our lives. To say thank you is simply not enough."

WCC Alumni Association contest winner

Congratulations to Carrie Mills, who won the WCC Alumni Association contest. Carrie graduated from WCC's nursing program in 2012 and joined the Alumni Association to grow her professional network.

If you've ever taken a class at WCC, you're an alum, too! Join the Alumni Association today:

wccnet.edu/alumni

23rd Annual WCC Foundation Jerry Jernigan Memorial

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Monday, August 15, 2016

Fox Hills

Golf & Banquet Center

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PHOTO BY SUSAN FERRARO

WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca and Al Lecz, director of the WCC Advanced Transportation Center (right), are interviewed by MLive at the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce's Mackinac Policy Conference.

WCC leaders attend annual Mackinac Policy Conference

By SUSAN FERRARO, APR
Director of Media Relations

In a venue where motorized vehicles are prohibited, there was no shortage of discussion about cars, trucks and buses and their future in society.

It was the annual Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce's Mackinac Policy Conference at the famous Grand Hotel last month and Washtenaw Community College was well represented.

WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca and Al Lecz, director of the WCC Advanced Transportation Center, were among approximately 1,700 of Michigan's top business and government leaders who were in attendance, including Gov. Rick Snyder and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan. The themes of this year's conference were Entrepreneurship, Investing In The Future, and Urban Education.

Dr. Bellanca attended a leadership roundtable discussion titled, "Auto On The Island" which included presentations on dynamics shaping the automotive industry, specifically in the area of mobility, self-driving cars and a skilled workforce.

Dr. Bellanca and Lecz were interviewed by several media outlets including Crain's Detroit Business, MLive and WWJ 950 AM.

They spoke about WCC's Entrepreneurship Center and Advanced Transportation Center, citing the college's commitment to training WCC students for a variety of skills, including how to open their own businesses or securing technician jobs in the areas of intelligent transportation systems.

"A key component of a community college is how we respond to the economic needs of the area," Dr. Bellanca told MLive.

"We are nimble and quick to adapt our programs to the workforce needs of business and industry. We continue to learn as much as possible to remain on the forefront of what skills employers are looking for in our graduates." ●

PHOTO BY LYNN MONSON

Attendees examine an engine during the Automechanika event at WCC.

WCC hosts first in series of Automechanika events

By SUSAN FERRARO, APR
Director of Media Relations

Automechanika Chicago kicked off a series of one-day reginoal training sessions at an event in May at Washtenaw Community College. More than 115 auto technicians, mechanics and auto body repair specialists from the Great Lakes region, including Canada, and the states of New Hampshire, Kentucky, Virginia and New Jersey, were on campus to learn about the rapidly changing technologies in vehicle maintenance and repair.

Automechanika Chicago and its organizers, Messe Frankfurt and UBM Americas (formerly Advanstar Communications, Inc.), launched the training series in cooperation with leading technical and community colleges to help support automotive repair specialists. Industry sponsors are also supporting the training program.

"We're very fortunate to have the involvement of leading companies in the service repair and collision repair market as we continue our on ongoing efforts to properly train shop owners, managers and technicians," said Jim Savas, vice president of UBM Americas.

The training sessions, he said, feature instructors known for providing outstanding content that can help shops keep pace with changing technology. A second training event will be held Saturday, Oct. 15 at Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, Wisconsin. ●

Toyota Technical Center grant

continued from cover

and Crashworthiness at the TTC and a director of the WCC Foundation Board.

"It is our civic responsibility to promote education while also upholding our own standard of excellence. The youth of today are the future of tomorrow," he said.

The Toyota Technical Center currently employs close to 10 WCC graduates, several of whom began their careers with Toyota as interns.

"WCC students do more than just change tires. They are excellent high-level technicians that contribute to valuable research and high-end testing," said Miller. "We couldn't be more pleased with the quality of education and skills they bring with them to the Toyota work environment."

"We are very grateful for this generous support from Toyota," said WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca. "These specific automotive programs are crucial to what we know are immediate needs in the automotive industry as it reinvents itself in the area of mobility – where there is a rapid convergence of auto and technology. These scholarships will assure that our students have the specific skills needed to make an immediate and seamless transition into this swiftly evolving workforce."

In addition to this endowment, Toyota has also extended generous donations of electronics testing equipment, valued at thousands of dollars, which will directly benefit students enrolled in laboratory classes in the electrical technologies department.

Toyota continues to support the mission of the WCC Foundation by helping sponsor annual events such as the Jerry Jernigan Memorial "Drive for Education" Golf Outing, Mardi Gras Gala and Women's Council Luncheon. ●

YouthBuild program changing lives

continued from cover

will pursue an associate degree in automotive services. Then, he's off to become a mechanic.

Recently, Fox began working on a tiny house that WCC will use to train YouthBuild students before they begin working on low-income housing in the community. The 164-square-foot house will include a kitchen, bathroom and loft for sleeping.

While on the path to a better life, Fox says being a positive role model to his two younger brothers and making his parents and grandparents proud are most important.

"When I dropped out, I didn't care about anything, including my future," he said. "If it wasn't for WCC, I don't know what I'd be doing."

"Many students enter the program with low self-esteem and they're not used to having anyone outside of their family or community in their corner," said Cristy Lindemann, department chair of construction technology at WCC and director of the YouthBuild Grant. "Students who didn't understand the next phase in their lives suddenly want more from their education and are ready to explore various career paths. It's exciting to see the transformations that happen."

> "This program gave me a second chance. It feels great to succeed."
>
> – Casey Fox

After completing the YouthBuild program, Fox will attain a GED, construction certifications and an OSHA certification, but perhaps one of the most important things he will attain is confidence and a sense of purpose. His advice to others who have walked in his shoes?

"Come to WCC," Fox said. "What's offered here cannot be found anywhere else. You can still be successful, but you have to want it. No one else can want it for you." ●